

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: GDS, 12-31-81

TAGS: PARM, PFOR, NATO

SUBJ: MBFR - COUNCIL DISCUSSION OF UK PAPER ON SOVIET ATTITUDES

REF: A) STATE 165414; B) USNATO 3823

SUMMARY. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT AT AUGUST 30 COUNCIL MEETING THAT UK PAPER ON SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD MBFR (TEXT REF B) WAS USEFUL DOCUMENT WHICH ALLIES SHOULD KEEP IN MIND BUT THAT EFFORT REACH AGREEMENT ON ASSESSMENT OF SOVIET POSITION WOULD NOT BE USEFUL. U.S. REP (RUMSFELD) DREW ON REF A, CANADIAN REP (MARSHALL) MADE REMARKS WHICH TENDED SUPPORT U.S. ASSESSMENT AND ITALIAN REP (BETTINI) NOTED ROME.S GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH UK ASSESSMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. OPENING DISCUSSION, CHAIRMAN (ASYG PANS) SAID HE FOUND UK PAPER EXTREMELY USEFUL BUT SUGGESTED THAT ALLIES SHOULD NOT UNDERTAKE EFFORT REACH AGREED ASSESSMENT OF A SUBJECT WHICH "LENDS ITSELF TO SPECULATION." CANADIAN
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REP CIRCULATED COMMENTS PROVIDED BY CANADIAN EMBASSY MOSCOW WHICH ARGUED, ITER ALIA, THAT SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD MBFR SHOULD BE SEEN IN WIDER CONTEXT THAN THAT ADOPTED IN UK PAPER. SPECIFICALLY, CANADIANS BELIEVE THAT OVERALL U.S.-

SOVIET RELATIONSHIP AND SOVIET-CHINESE RELATIONSHIP HAVE IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR SOVIET APPROACH TO MBFR. IN SUM, CANADIANS TEND TAKE LESS PESSIMISTIC POSITION THAN UK ON SOVIET ATTITUDE AND POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF MBFR NEGOTIATION.

2. ITALIAN REP (BETTINI) SAID ROME AGREED WITH UK PAPER'S JUDGMENT (PARA 3, OF SUMMARY) THAT SOVIET ATTITUDE MUST BE SEEN AGAINST BACKGROUND OF LONG-TERM SOVIET POLICY IN EUROPE. HE SAID ROME ALSO AGREED WITH JUDGMENT IN PARA 4 OF UK PAPER THAT SOVIETS WOULD SEEK TO DEAL BILATERALLY WITH U.S. AND SHARED UK'S ASSUPTION THAT SOVIETS WERE NOT AFTER QUICK RESULTS IN MBFR BUT WERE RATHER INTERESTED IN WHAT THEY COULD GET OUT OF NEGOTIATIONS. BETTINI NOTED THAT ROME HAD SOME PROBLEMS WITH JUDGMENT IN PARA 10 OF UK PAPER THAT SOVIETS WERE INCLINED TO BE CAUTIOUS ON MBFR BECAUSE OF THEIR HIGH EVALUATION OF NATO'S MILITARY CAPACITY. HE SUGGESTED THAT THIS WAS A POINT WHICH MIGHT BE USEFULLY EXAMINED IN GREATER DETAIL.

3. DRAWING ON REF A, RUMSFELD EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO UK FOR PROVIDING A USEFUL PAPER BUT POINTED OUT THAT UK PAPER ILLUSTRATED FACT THAT WESTERN ANALYSTS WILL CONTINUE TO DIFFER AMONG THEMSELVES ON SOVIET MOTIVATIONS AND OBJECTIVES. RUMSFELD SAID ALLIES SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT INTELLIGENCE SPECULATIONS HAVE SOMETIMES BEEN PROVEN WRONG AND THAT SOVIETS CAN ACT UNPREDICTABLY. ACCORDINGLY, HE SUGGESTED, WHILE USEFUL ASSESSMENTS OF SOVIET OBJECTIVES, SUCH AS THAT PROVIDED BY UK, SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND ALLIES SHOULD NOT RELY ON RIGID ASSESSMENT OF SOVIET MOTIVATIONS.

4. UK REP (THOMSON) AGREED WITH RUMSFELD'S VIEW THAT SOVIET ATTITUDES WERE COMPLICATED AND THAT WESTERN ANALYSTS WOULD FREQUENTLY TAKE DIFFERENT POSITIONS. HOWEVER, HE STRESSED THAT ALLIES MUST GIVE CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THIS SUBJECT AND SUGGESTED THAT DURING PERIOD LEADING UP TO VIENNA PREPARATORY TALKS ALLIES HAD BEEN "MESMERIZED"

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BY NEED TO DEVELOP AGREED POSITION AND HAD IGNORED DIFFICULTIES OF PRESENTING VIEWS AND POSITIONS TO SOVIETS. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT ALLIES WOULD DO BETTER IN PREPARING FOR ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW FACT THAT SOVIETS WILL MAINTAIN SLOW PACE IN VIENNA AND SEEK MAXIMIZE POSSIBILITY OF ALLIED DISUNITY. THOMSON ALSO MAINTAINED THAT ALL ALLIES HAD LEARNED ABOUT SOVIET MBFR POSITION DURING PREPARATORY TALKS WAS THAT SOVIETS WERE TOTALLY OPPOSED TO BASIC ALLIED AIM OF ASYMMETRICAL CUTS LEADING TO SYMMETRICAL OUTCOME.

5. RUMSFELD SAID THAT QUICK READING OF PAPER CIRCULATED BY CANADIANS AND THOMSON'S REMARKS POINTED OUT NEED FOR ALLIES TO DEVELOP COHERENT PUBLIC POSITION ON MBFR BY

ADJUSTING THEIR RHETORIC TO REQUIREMENTS OF SITUATION.
THUS ALLIES COULD CONSIDER USE OF TERM "SYMMETRY OF RESULTS"
RATHER THAN ASYMMETRICAL REDUCTIONS TO OPPOSE POSSIBLE
SOVIET EMPHASIS ON "SYMMETRY OF CUTS," POINTING OUT THAT WHAT
IS IMPORTANT IS THE BALANCE AND STABILITY AFTER ANY REDUCTIONS.
BELGIAN PERMREP (DE STAERCKE) AGREED. LUXEMBOURG REP (HOSTERT)
ASKED WHETHER UK BELIEVED ALLIES COULD REACH ACCEPTABLE
MBFR AGREEMENT WITH USSR. THOMSON SAID UK BELIEVED ALLIES
CAN OBTAIN ADVANTAGES FROM MBFR BUT THAT IT WAS BY NO MEANS
CERTAIN THEY WOULD. IN THIS CONNECTION, THOMSON REFERRED TO
RECENT PRAVDA ARTICLE WHICH HE SAID FOR FIRST TIME DEVOTED EQUAL
ATTENTION TO MBFR AND CSCE AND BEGAN TO TREAT MBFR AS POTENTIALLY
ADVANTAGEOUS TO USSR. TURKISH REP (TULUMEN) SAID HE DID NOT HAVE
IMPRESSION THAT SOVIETS HAD YET COME TO CONCLUSION THAT MBFR COULD
WORK TO THEIR ADVANTAGE, BUT HE ADDED THAT THEY COULD VERY WELL
COME TO THIS CONCLUSION OF NEGOTIATIONS RESULTED IN ALLIED
DISUNITY OR ALLIES FOLD UNDER TIME PRESSURE.

6.COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SEVERAL DELEGATIONS DID NOT COMMENT ON
UK PAPER, WE BELIEVE THAT IT WILL NOT BE SUBJECT OF FURTHER
COUNCIL DISCUSSION UNLESS BRITISH SPECIFICALLY REQUEST ADDITIONAL
CONSIDERATION. RUMSFELD

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